

MEDICAL OFFICERS'
ANNUAL REPORT.

1895.

SOUTH BLYTH URBAN DISTRICT.



THIS BEING THE SPECIAL FILE COPY FOR
LIBRARY B. M. A., IT IS PARTICULARLY
REQUESTED THAT IT MAY BE RETURNED
AT AS EARLY A DATE AS POSSIBLE.



TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS

SOUTH BLYTH URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

GENTLEMEN,—I have the honour to submit to you my Annual Report for the year 1895

During the year 97 deaths were registered as occurring in your district. This gives a Death Rate of 24·85 per thousand on the estimated population, 3,903. Twelve of these deaths were in persons not residing in the district, six being seafaring men who were drowned, two vagrants who died suddenly, and the remaining four died while visiting friends. The corrected Death Rate is 22·03 per thousand.

This rate would be considerably reduced if the population could be more accurately estimated. For instance the estimated increase in the population for the year is 75, whereas your Surveyor informs me that 141 houses were completed and occupied during the year.

The following table shews the Death Rate for the past four years :—

Year.	Rate.
1892	19·3
1893	23·44
1894	15·93
1895	22·03

Or a Mean Rate of 20·17. The Rate is higher in the North Ward than in the South.

The following table will show the incidence of the Death Rate in the two Wards for the past four years :—

Year.	Rate in North Ward.	Rate in South Ward.
1892	20·1	17·3
1893	23·99	22·94
1894	13·39	21·91
1895	23·72	17·19

The Mean Rate for the North Ward for the four years being 20·3, that for the South Ward being 19·68. Shewing that while it varies somewhat from year to year, there is no great difference in the rate of mortality of the two Wards when a number of years are considered.

The Infantile Death Rate for the whole district for the year is 177.29, being 185.94 for the North Ward, and 156.86 for the South Ward. The following table will shew the Infantile Death Rate for the past four years :—

Year.	Rate for Whole District.	Rate for North Ward.	Rate for South Ward.
1892	149.4	123.45	188.67
1893	242.03	220.0	280.7
189	117.64	84.21	172.41
1895	177.29	185.94	156.86
Mean Rate ...	171.59	153.4	199.66

You will notice that while the Infantile Death Rate for this year is lower in the South Ward than in the North Ward, that taking the four years it is considerably higher.

During the year 164 Births were registered, giving a Birth Rate for the whole district of 42.01, being 41.24 for the North Ward, and 43.85 for the South Ward. The following table will show the Birth Rate for the past four years :—

Year.	Rate for Whole District.	Rate for North Ward.	Rate for South Ward.
1892	36.44	31.0	48.31
1893	41.82	37.96	50.93
1894	39.96	35.35	50.83
1895	42.01	41.24	43.85
Mean Rate...	40.05	36.38	48.48

This table shews plainly the larger Birth Rate in the South Ward, which is almost purely a working class population as compared with the North Ward, where the population is mixed.

The deaths from Zymotic Disease during the year were 23, giving a rate of 5.89. Distributed in the North Ward 6.2, in the South Ward 5.15. The following table will shew the deaths from Zymotic Diseases during the past four years :—

DISEASE.	1892	1893	1894	1895
Smallpox	—	—	—	—
Scarletina	—	—	—	1
Diphtheria.....	—	—	—	1
Membranous Croup	1	—	—	—
Typhus Fever	—	—	—	—
Typhoid or Enteric Fever.....	—	2	4	3
Continued Fever	—	—	—	—
Puerperal Fever	—	1	—	2
Cholera	—	1	—	—
Measles	1	1	2	4
Whooping Cough	1	—	2	1
Diarrhoea and Dysentery.....	—	18	3	11
Totals	3	23	11	23
Zymotic Rate.....	0.81	6.12	2.88	5.89
General Rate..	19.3	23.44	15.93	22.03

A glance at this table will shew that the greatest factor in the production of the Zymotic Death Rate is Diarrhoea, which prevailed in both Wards from July to September (inclusive.) Of the eleven deaths seven were under six months, and only one was over a year. On careful enquiry I found that eight were bottle-fed children, and I attribute the mortality to this disease as largely due to the difficulty experienced in keeping the bottle and fittings properly clean, and in keeping the milk food from turning sour. Of course sanitary condition must also bear a part, as it is well known that milk is a splendid cultivating medium, and in the warm months you have all the conditions favourable to the growth of microbes. I think the distribution of printed instructions did some good, and I would advise the repetition, and that disinfectants be distributed free during these months. The Zymotic Rate for South Ward is 4·3 ; for North Ward 6·4.

You will notice that the Zymotic Rate is highest in the North Ward, and this is chiefly due to the Diarrhoea and to three deaths from Typhoid Fever. Twelve cases of this disease were notified during the year, eleven in the North Ward and one in the South Ward. Of those in the North Ward two were in Ridley Street, two in Freehold Street, two in Stanley Street, two in Percy Street, one in Northumberland Street, one in Eldon Street, and one in Folly Terrace. One case was reported in March, two in April, one in May, three in July, three in October, and two in November. Four of these cases could be clearly traced, and were undoubtedly imported, three were probably due to sanitary defects, and the remainder it was impossible to trace. Prompt measures were adopted in every case, and no instance came under my notice where a case arose by contagion with another patient.

CONTINUED FEVER.—Two cases were reported of this disease, both in children, and of a mild type. No sanitary defect could be found in either case.

DIPHTHERIA.—Four cases of this disease were notified during the year, one of which proved fatal. Three of the cases arose in Tate Street, and were clearly due to defective sanitation ; the houses being damp and badly ventilated, with the floors of the houses below the level of the yard. Prompt measures were adopted, disinfectants liberally employed, and the defects immediately remedied, with the result that what looked at first like an outbreak was nipped early in the bud. The other case occurred in Stanley Street, and it was impossible to trace it to any definite cause.

ERYSIPELAS.—Four cases of this disease were notified, three in the South Ward and one in the North Ward. They were all traumatic, and no particular sanitary defect was discovered in any of them.

PUERPERAL FEVER.—Two cases of this disease were reported in the same row of houses in the South Ward. The houses are new and well drained and ventilated. In each case, however, the parturition was premature, and I therefore think the disease was autogenetic. All precautions were taken to prevent the spread of this fatal disease, my greatest difficulty being in preventing the visits of gossiping neighbours, who in that way carry the disease from one to another.

SCARLET FEVER.—One case of this disease was notified in June, two in October, and five in December. One case was in Stanley Street, two in Percy Street, four in Nelson Place, and one in Back Eldon Street. It was impossible to trace these cases to a common cause, and to connect them with each other, except in the case of Nelson Place, where the two infected houses were close beside each other, and were not sufficiently ventilated. The dealing with an outbreak of Scarlet Fever is very unsatisfactory unless the first case can be removed to an Isolation Hospital—a course against which there is a very great, though very improper, prejudice in this neighbourhood. It will, I think, have a good effect, however, if you will let it be widely known that all expenses incurred for keep in hospital, &c., will be borne by the Council, as no doubt that is one of the reasons why some at any rate are averse to the removal.

MEASLES prevailed in the North Ward during the three first months of the year, and caused four deaths, in every case from complications. No action was considered necessary in relation to the schools of the district.

WHOOPING COUGH caused a death in a child in January from complications. The disease was at no time during the year epidemic.

The deaths from Phthisis are six, giving a death rate from this cause of 1·53, which compares favourably with the death rate all over England from this disease.

The number of deaths from Drowning are eight, six of these being seafaring men not connected with the district.

During the year the main Culvert between this and the neighbouring Authority has been carried down to the River, and the nuisance caused thereby abated. It will be necessary, however, that greater care than ever be exercised in the ventilation of all branch drains connected therewith, as the danger of forcing traps by gas under pressure owing to the tide locking is greater than formerly existed with the open runner. I might also point out here the danger, in my opinion, arising from the building of houses on the reclaimed land which a year or two back was saturated with sewage, and the gas from which must sooner or later come to the surface. In my opinion all such houses ought to have their floors laid with strong concrete, and ample provision be made for ventilation of the foundations.

During the year I reported to you the condition of the Sewer in Back Bridge Street, which I found to be a common rubble drain, infested with rats, and having emptying into it seven water closets. This has now been remedied, and a new sewer laid and properly ventilated.

The routine sanitary work of the district has been carried on systematically. Besides my monthly inspections I made 57 special inspections in connection with cases of Infectious disease or minor sanitary defects, chiefly middens with water in them. I think it would be wise to consider the advisability of abolishing the present system of middens, and adopting the pail system, which is more cleanly, more easily scavenged, and would be quite as cheap after the first cost as the present system.

I understand that there is a probability of a Public Park being provided close to your present refuse tip. If the Park should become an accomplished fact it will be absolutely necessary to find a fresh tip for the refuse, as under the altered circumstances the present tip would become a nuisance.

The complaints about the quantity of water supplied have been many and loud, especially from those who live in the higher levels of the town. In its present condition the supply is dangerous, as where waterclosets have been adopted owing to scarcity of water flushing cannot be carried out properly. In my opinion the cause of the present scarcity is due to the small size of the main service pipe, which is too small to meet the rapidly increasing requirements of the district. I am still of the opinion that the water supply ought to be in the hands of the Council, and I know that the present proprietor, the Right Hon. Sir Matthew White Ridley, is willing to sell. Could the purchase not be brought about by arbitration?

No prosecutions have been instituted during the year, as I believe in the *Suaviter in modo* rather than in the *Fortiter in re*.

The usual tables are appended.

I am, gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN CROMIE.

TABLE OF DEATHS DURING THE YEAR 1895 IN THE
SOUTH BLYTH URBAN SANITARY DISTRICT,
 Classified according to Diseases, Ages, and Localities.

NAMES OF LOCALITIES adopted for the purpose of these Statistics : public institutions being shown as separate localities. (Columns for Population and Births are in Table B)		MORTALITY FROM ALL CAUSES, AT SUBJOINED AGES							MORTALITY FROM SUBJOINED CAUSES, DISTINGUISHING DEATHS OF CHILDREN UNDER FIVE YEARS OF AGE.															
		(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)	(i)	Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.	Enteric or Typhoid	Puerperal Fever.	Measles.	Whooping Cough.	Diarrhoea and Dysentery.	Rheumatic Fever.	Phthisis.	Bronchitis and Pneumonia	Heart Disease.	Injuries.	All Other Diseases.	Total.	
North Ward.	77	22	11	5	3	20	16	Under 5 5 upwds.	..... ..... 1	..... ..... 2	..... ..... .....	..... ..... .....	..... ..... 1	..... ..... .....	..... ..... .....	8	..... ..... 1	..... ..... 3	..... ..... 3	..... ..... 6	..... ..... 8	..... ..... 18	33 44
	20	8	4	0	2	4	2	Under 5 5 upwds.	..... ..... .....	..... ..... .....	..... ..... 2	..... ..... .....	..... ..... .....	..... ..... .....	1	3	..... ..... .....	1	..... ..... .....	..... ..... .....	..... ..... 4	..... ..... 5	12 8
	97	30	15	5	5	24	18	Under 5 5 upwds.	..... ..... 1	..... ..... 2	..... ..... 2	..... ..... 1	..... ..... .....	..... ..... .....	..... ..... .....	11	..... ..... 1	..... ..... 4	..... ..... 3	..... ..... 6	..... ..... 8	..... ..... 22	45 52
The subjoined numbers have also to be taken into account in judging of the above records of mortality.																								
Deaths occurring within the district among persons not belonging thereto.	12	1				11		Under 5 5 upwds. 1 6 3	1 11

Table of POPULATION, BIRTHS, AND OF NEW CASES OF INFECTIOUS SICKNESS, coming to the knowledge of the Medical Officer of Health, during the year 1895, in the

SOUTH BLYTH URBAN SANITARY DISTRICT,

Classified according to DISEASES, AGES and LOCALITIES.

NAMES OF LOCALITIES adopted for the purpose of these Statistics; public institutions being shown as separate localities.	POPULATION AT ALL AGES.			Registered Births.	Aged under 5 or over 5	NEW CASES OF SICKNESS IN EACH LOCALITY COMING TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.						
	Census 1891	Estimated to middle of 1895.	(b)			(c)	(d)	(e)	Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.	Enteric or Typhoid	Continued Fever.	Puerperal Fever.	Erysipelas.
(a)												
North Ward.	2515	2740	113	Under 5 5 upwds	3 5	1 3	1 10	1 1	..... ..... .....	..... ..... .....	..... ..... .....	..... ..... 1
South Ward.	1070	1163	51	Under 5 5 upwds	..... ..... .....	..... ..... .....	..... ..... 1	..... ..... .....	..... ..... .....	..... ..... 2	..... ..... 3	
Totals	3585	3903	164	Under 5 5 upwds	3 5	1 3	1 11	1 1	..... ..... .....	..... ..... 2	..... ..... 4	

State here whether " Notification of Infectious Disease " is compulsory in the District ? Yes. Since when ? December, 1893. State here the name of the Isolation Hospital used by the sick of the District Mark (H) the Locality in which such Hospital is situated ; and if not within the District, state where it is situated : PORT SANITARY HOSPITAL, COWPEN DISTRICT.

